

**STATEMENT OF**  
**THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS**  
**CHAIRMAN**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND STANDARDS**  
**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE**  
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Full Committee Hearing

*Science, Technology and Global Economic Competitiveness*

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I am delighted with the Academy for producing this report, and am pleased that the Committee is taking the time to delve into the report's recommendations and proposed implementation.

For many years, I have stressed the need to increase our national investment in fundamental research and education. Despite passing an authorization bill to double the budget of the National Science Foundation (NSF) by 2008, we are still falling very short of that goal set by Congress in 2002. Each year, the chasm between the authorization and appropriation broadens, while at the same time the NSF education budget continues to diminish. But today there is an increasing number of voices joining the chorus recognizing the need for change. The voices are louder and clearer as the message begins to unify: build our science, technology, engineering and math skills, and we will maintain the strength and competitiveness of the United States. Business, industry and academic leaders are all drawing attention to the connection between our prosperity and a technically-skilled workforce. As we see the indications that our science and math

education is slipping, we are jeopardizing our quality of life and national security, especially for our children and grandchildren. Without bolstering our science and technology infrastructure, we cannot expect these trends to change.

There are many challenging questions raised by the report; it will take the strong dedication of the committee and chair to share these recommendations with a variety of stakeholders. I thank the witnesses today for their good work encourage them to continue to publicize this problem and lobby Members of Congress to make national competitiveness a priority through their strong support of fundamental research and education. I commend the witnesses for being here today, and look forward to continuing to work with you to not only share your report recommendations, but to actively seek solutions.